

# IndyCar Media Conference

Sunday April 15, 2018

## Will Power

## Ed Jones

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We will go ahead and get started with our Verizon IndyCar Series post-race press conference. Pleased to be joined by our second- and third-place finisher, Will Power and Ed Jones respectively. Will Power is driving the No. 12 Verizon Team Penske Chevrolet for Team Penske, finished second in today's Toyota Grand Prix of Long Beach. Podium No. 63 for Will Power in his career. Will, we noticed towards the end of the race, you did have a lot of Push-to-Pass left. Did you think you might have a shot to overtake and get the win?

WILL POWER: Yeah, I did. I mean, I needed to get close enough to him to make him use his, but I just stayed at that one-second gap, just kind of couldn't make time on him enough to use it up. But yeah, it's like qualifying every lap for both of us there at the end. At the end of the day, I mean, Rossi was just too fast all day. Just really good. Yeah, that's pretty much all we had.

THE MODERATOR: Also joined by Ed Jones, driving the No. 10 NTT DATA Chip Ganassi Racing Honda. Started 13th, finished third, his second career podium in the Verizon IndyCar Series. The last one came at the 2017 Indianapolis 500, but his first podium with Chip Ganassi Racing team. Ed, obviously a great result for you today. I know Phoenix didn't end exactly the way you wanted it to. Does this feel like a bit of a redemption for that?

ED JONES: Yeah, definitely. It's been an up-and-down start to the season for me with Chip Ganassi Racing. It's a big move for me after my rookie season. We struggled this weekend early on, especially on Friday. We made some good jumps for Saturday, but we still qualified 13th, which wasn't good enough.

But you know, the guys played a great strategy and did great pit stops, and a little bit lucky with the yellows, as well, to be able to end up third.

Yeah, it was great after the disappointment at Phoenix where we were on easy for second place, so that was disappointing, but it's good to be on the podium, and hopefully this will give us some momentum for the upcoming races.

**Q. How much did the weather play an impact in the**

**car with the clouds coming in that weren't there at any other point this weekend?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, I mean, track temp just helps this car because it gets its downforce from the floor, so any time the track temp goes down, you get more grip and less degradation, so yeah, that certainly helped a bit of that. There wasn't that much degradation as we thought. If it had been a hot, sunny day, I think it would have been a little bit hotter, but yeah, it's kind of hard to tell because we were all running full tanks and everything.

ED JONES: Yeah, I agree with Will. Degradation wasn't really much of a factor for us. I think getting up to speed was a bit more difficult because of the cooler conditions, and for us anyway, the balance usually when it was hotter was quite different to the cooler conditions, and I think that helped us in our position quite a bit.

**Q. Will, we talked about the tires; how much did fuel consumption figure into the pit stop strategy along with not so many yellows, I guess?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, we got that yellow at the beginning of the race, which kind of really helped get to that number we needed to. I mean, we were saving fuel pretty much the whole first stint. But kind of after that, it was reasonably easy where the yellows fell to get that number on two stops. So yeah, we caught that last yellow perfect, or the yellow that came before the last stop, well, just after my last stop. It kind of caught Dixon out. But yeah, that's the problem with pits closed, you can just totally ruin someone's day who's done a good job.

**Q. Guys, Long Beach has traditionally been sort of a springboard. Even though it's a road and street course, it's sort of been a springboard going into Indianapolis. Do you feel like that this year?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, well, looking at the crowd, it's pretty impressive. A lot of people here. If you look at the series and everything as a whole, it's at a great level as far as teams and drivers go, and it's on the upward slope.

But yeah, it's just a cool, historic race, and you would say it's second to Indianapolis as far as wanting to win.

ED JONES: No, I agree with Will. I think the turnout this year was incredible. You know, always the atmosphere is good here, but even from -- I had already done two years here before, but from the past I

think it's even better, and the amount of people and the interest in IndyCar now has grown, and it looks pretty good for the month of May.

**Q. Will, you've been in the series a long time now. Is this the most talented field that you've ever had to race against?**

WILL POWER: Yes, I would say right now is the most competitive, talented group of drivers that the series has seen. When you look at how Rossi has come on and the rookies that are here this year, guys like Wickens and so on, it just gets harder. It gets harder and harder, and the common body kit I think was a really, really good idea. Yeah, great, great, honestly. To win and be on pole these days, you've just got to get it so right.

**Q. The new car, the new downforce, the new aero package, is this an easier car to drive, or is it more driver, and you like being able to do the driving?**

WILL POWER: It's definitely more driver input. You're just sliding -- you slide around a lot more.

Physically, you know, not quite as physically as hard, but you're just on the wheel so much more. I mean, you're brushing the wall all the time because it's just sliding a lot more. Way, way better. Enjoy this car the most. I can't tell you -- I think since Champ Car, honestly. That's kind of what it reminds me of. Yeah, we've been talking about taking downforce out, and they've done it. I think when you think about the short oval when we raced at Phoenix, you're actually braking there, and we haven't braked in an oval for about -- probably since CART days. Yeah, it's exactly the right direction. You can follow closer, and it's more about the driver.

**Q. Ed, you raced here in Indy Lights, had some success. How much did that car relate more to this year? I know last year the car didn't really relate to what you'd had in Indy Lights. How about this year? Is it a little bit closer?**

ED JONES: Yeah, for sure. I think the style of driving now is much closer to what the Indy Lights car is. The package with the Indy Lights car and the Cooper tires, now the new IndyCar and the Firestone is actually pretty similar, the style. Obviously the speed is different.

But I think it's a lot closer to that, and I think it's very good for Mazda Road to Indy and for drivers coming up for preparation. For me it was quite a big jump last year going into what the package was, whereas now I think coming into this car, it's a lot smoother transition, I guess, just because it's a lot more similar in the way you have a lot less grip, you're sliding a lot more. And the thing is, what Will actually said, I think in preseason testing -- I caught on to it, too, on Friday, with this car you can't really build the setup around to exactly what really like. There's kind of one way you have to drive it. It has to be pretty loose, and that's the only way to be

quick, to be quick with this car and have it moving around. That's pretty similar, as well, to what the Lights car was like.

**Q. Will, you've had weekends in your career where you didn't turn a wheel wrong all weekend. Alex had that weekend this weekend. What's it like when a driver is just able to have a perfect weekend?**

WILL POWER: Yeah, that's a great feeling when you have one of those weekends. If I remember last year, I had one of these weekends going at Barber, quickest in every session, pole, leading all but the last 15 laps, and we got a flat tire. But yeah, that's pretty -- it's great when you just dominate the weekend, don't get caught out by a yellow. Yeah, when you look at what Rossi did this weekend, man, really, really, really strong. I think he's going to be tough to beat in the championship. He's definitely what I'd call a stand-out of the field right now in every respect. I mean, even when we saw him at Phoenix on the oval, as well. Yeah, you'll have to beat him, I think.